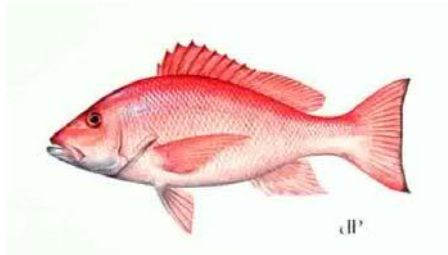


Gulf of Mexico 2014 Recreational Red Snapper Season Final Emergency Rule – Accountability Measures

Frequently Asked Questions

May 2014



How does the final emergency rule affect the 2014 recreational red snapper season in federal waters?

- The final rule sets a 9-day season for recreational red snapper. This season length was calculated based on the annual catch target established in this emergency rule and including 2013 Marine Recreational Information Program data.
- For all federal waters, the season begins **June 1, 2014**, at 12:01 a.m. and closes **June 10, 2014**, at 12:01 a.m., local time.
- State water season lengths for states with consistent regulations
 - **Mississippi and Alabama:** In federal and state waters off Mississippi and Alabama, the season will be 9 days and close on **June 10, 2014**, at 12:01 a.m., local time.
- State water season lengths for states with inconsistent regulations
 - **Texas:** State waters are open all year for recreational red snapper fishing with a four-fish bag limit.
 - **Louisiana:** State waters are open with a two-fish bag limit.
 - **Florida:** State waters are open May 24 – July 14, 2014, with a two-fish bag limit.

What does the emergency rule do?

- Establishes a recreational annual catch target by applying a 20-percent buffer on the recreational quota.
- Revises the 2014 recreational fishing season for red snapper in the exclusive economic zone of the Gulf.
- The purpose of this rulemaking is to better ensure red snapper recreational landings do not exceed the recreational quota established in the rebuilding plan, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia (Court) ruling in *Guindon v. Pritzker* (Mar. 26, 2014).

Why is the recreational season length 9 days instead of the 40-day season announced in December 2013?

- In March 2014, the Court ruled, in part, that NOAA Fisheries failed to require adequate accountability measures for the recreational sector to ensure the recreational quota was not exceeded. The court also found NOAA Fisheries failed to use the best scientific information available by not including the 2013 Marine Recreational Information Program data to determine whether there should be a fall season.
- The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council requested this emergency rule at their April 2014 meeting to better ensure red snapper recreational landings do not exceed the recreational quota established in the rebuilding plan, in accordance the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and the Court's ruling.
- The inconsistent state seasons account for nearly half of the total recreational quota.
- Establishing a recreational annual catch target, by applying the 20-percent buffer, further reduced the season to 9 days.

How does the final emergency rule affect the commercial sector of the reef fish fishery?

- This emergency rule does not affect the commercial harvest of red snapper in the reef fish fishery, because the commercial sector is managed by an individual fishing quota program with accountability measures.

How is the red snapper fishery currently managed?

- Recreational red snapper harvest in federal waters:
 - 49 percent of the quota.
 - Minimum size limit of 16 inches total length.
 - Daily bag limit of two fish with a zero bag limit for the captain and crew of for-hire vessels.
 - Seasonal closure: Opens June 1, and closure date is announced each year.
- Commercial red snapper harvest:
 - 51 percent of the quota.
 - Minimum size limit of 13 inches total length.
 - Individual fishing quota program, which allocates the commercial quota among individual fishers and corporations (see link at end of this document).

Links to additional information on red snapper management and rulemaking

- Red snapper assessment process and reports
(http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/Sedar_Workshops.jsp?WorkshopNum=07)
- Commercial red snapper IFQ program (<https://ifq.sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/ifqrs/index.cfm>)
- Recreational Red Snapper Management
http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/red_snapper/index.html